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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

MONDAY, JULY 23, 2007

In Today's Papers

Parliamentary Election Results

All papers report that PM Erdogan's AKP is the winner of yesterday's general elections, receiving the 46.6 percent of the votes. With this percentage AKP will have 340 seats in the Parliament and will be able to form a single-party government for the second time. Main opposition party CHP got 20.9 percent of the votes, MHP 14.2 percent, and independents 5.2 percent of the votes, reports mainstream Sabah. Fifty-two female candidates entered parliament, 31 from AKP, 10 from CHP, 2 from MHP and 9 Independents supported by the mainly Kurdish DTP. Out of 28 Independent candidates elected to Parliament, 23 of them are supported by the DTP. Participation in the general election was 85.1 percent, adds Sabah.

Papers point out that although three parties crossed the 10% election threshold, there will be seven parties in parliament. DTP has 23 deputies, DSP will be represented with 13 deputies who ran under the CHP banner, ODP and BBP will be the 6th and 7th parties in the parliament because their leaders Ufuk Uras and Muhsin Yazicioglu were elected as independents. Papers also speculate that former PM Mesut Yilmaz, who also was elected as an independent, may lead a political party in the future.

DP leader Agar resigned from his party chairmanship when initial results showed that his party would remain under the 10 percent threshold. Party vice chairman Nuzhet Kandemir also resigned.

Mainstream Milliyet reports that MHP leader Bahceli said in a written statement after learning the results, that the nation had "designated the party to perform the duty of the opposition" for the second time and that "holding elections in a democratic atmosphere" was a "pleasing fact" and "all should respect the decision of the people."

Milliyet notes that although AKP came out victorious from the

elections, it could not get the 367 seats required for a quorum to start the Presidential election process which is the most critical political issue in the near future.

Papers also report that addressing his party supporters in front of the AKP headquarters PM Erdogan said "we got the message from the ballot box. The responsibility on the shoulders of the party has increased and we will "never compromise the basic principles of our republic." PM Erdogan added that the government will continue pursuing the EU goal and the fight against terrorism will continue.

Editorial Opinion on Election Results:

"The Victory"

Gungor Mengi writes in the mainstream daily Vatan: "As winner of the election, the AKP should act with responsibility. They have to act in the spirit of reconciliation and should take steps to eliminate the perception that AKP is anti-secular. With this election result, the center-right parties of Turkey have been dissolved. AKP should take steps to fit itself into this category. Also it is very obvious that [main opposition] CHP should go through a transformation and get rid of its 'pro status quo' and conservative identity. Deniz Baykal, the leader of CHP, has an immediate task to fulfill: bringing contemporary leadership to CHP under a young leader. He should start working on this immediately before even swimming to Rhodes [as he said he would if his party had a poor showing]."

"Thanks to the Army"

Avni Ozgurel writes in the liberal-intellectual daily Radikal: "The AKP has achieved something very unique by managing to increase its percentage while ruling. No government party in the last 53 years has done this. Interestingly enough, AKP support was about 26

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percent as of last April. However, the developments which started with the military's e-warning and continued with the [disruption of the] presidential election process, helped AKP and its leader Erdogan gain more popular support. Let's hope that at least supporters of the military warning have now realized the big mistake."

"Civilian Democratic Coup"

Ibrahim Karagul writes in the Islamist leaning daily Yeni Safak: "The election results indicate two facts: 1) Turkish people neither favored state bureaucratic nationalism nor ethnic Kurdish nationalism; and 2) even though CHP is number two in the parliament in terms of seat-numbers, MHP is going to be the real opposition to the AKP. The Turkish political structure is undergoing significant changes. Both the rhetoric and the nature of the debates will change. With these results, this is clearly a civilian democratic coup."

"Turkey: One Big Family"

Ertugrul Ozkok writes in the mass appeal daily Hurriyet: "Prime Minister Erdogan promised to become a political leader for all of Turkey as part of his election campaign strategy. The level of support for the AKP indicates that his promise was taken seriously by people. The fact of the matter is that the percentage of AKP support should not and cannot be interpreted as religiously motivated votes. Such an interpretation is not only an irrational thought but also it is against sociological facts. Erdogan as well as his party is now located squarely in the center-right of the political spectrum."

Allegations on US Selling Weapons to Arab Tribes in Kirkuk
Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet and Islamist-oriented Zaman report that the police chief in Kirkuk Serhat Kadir claimed on Kurdistan Patriotic Union Party's official internet site that the US military started supplying weapons to Arab tribes in and around Kirkuk. Kadir added that they are concerned that the Arab tribes will form illegal militias after owning the US weapons.

TV News:

(NTV, 6 A.M.)
Domestic News

Holiday resorts in the Aegean and Mediterranean emptied out as voters returned to their homes for the elections

US Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Bryza praised Turkish elections saying that 'This is a big success for Turkish democracy.'

International News

EC President Barroso urged EU member states not to shut the door on Turkey for membership negotiations.

Tony Blair, the new special envoy for the Middle East peace quartet will meet Palestinian and Israeli leaders on Tuesday

Four Lebanese soldiers were killed and 15 wounded when a building exploded when they entered a Palestinian refugee camp where some Al-Qaeda militants were living.

WILSON